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Moynihan Has Doubts Over More Aid for Nicaragua Rebels

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WASHINGTON, April 27 — Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan said today that the United States-financed covert operations in Nicaragua were not working and that he had doubts about whether he would continue to support the program.

The New York Democrat, who has played a key role in bringing bipartisan support in the Senate for the covert activities, appeared to be near the point of breaking with the Administration on the wisdom of the operations.

Aid Did Not Produce Talks

On Thursday Senator Moynihan withdrew his resignation as vice chairman of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence after the Director of Central Intelligence, William J. Casey, apologized for not keeping the panel better informed. Mr. Moynihan had submitted his resignation on the ground that the C.I.A. had not properly informed the committee of its activities, particularly its role in mining Nicaraguan harbors.

Mr. Moynihan said the C.I.A. financing of rebels opposed to the Nicaraguan Government "had not produced the negotiations it was hoped it would produce."

"If it has, I don't know about it," the Senator said.

When asked if he still supported the covert operations he voted for in the Senate on April 5, Mr. Moynihan said in an interview, "I'm not sure."

"Somehow the Administration keeps going beyond what the Congress understands the program to be," he added.

After Mr. Moynihan voted to approve \$21 million in aid to the Nicaraguan rebels, Mr. Moynihan said he did not know of the extent of the mining of Nicaraguan harbors by the C.I.A.

Served for Eight Years

Mr. Moynihan, who has served on the committee for eight years, agreed to withdraw his resignation Thursday after an arrangement was worked out under which Mr. Casey apologized to the committee and promised to improve ways of keeping the panel better informed.

Senator David Durenberger, Republican of Minnesota, and a member of the intelligence committee, said Mr. Moynihan had behaved during the last

two weeks as "only an Irishman could," adding, "Pat is being Pat and we all understand that."

Mr. Durenberger, who voted for the covert aid on April 5, said Mr. Moynihan's willingness to "participate in a repair job" between the committee and the agency could be a sign that Mr. Moynihan still supported the Administration on covert aid.

"Or it could mean that he has established high visibility leverage and that he intends to use that leverage to bring about changes," Mr. Durenberger said.

In his office today, Mr. Moynihan said it was "entirely possible" that he would be against covert aid by the time of the Democratic convention in July.

Mr. Moynihan said today that he considered the arguments of the last two weeks between the C.I.A. and the Senate committee to be a matter of notification procedure and not a matter of the substance of the covert programs, including the mining. He has said he believed the mining was illegal because it violated the rights of passage in territorial waters.

Mr. Moynihan said the Administra-

tion had to now "rethink" the undercover operations. "They have to ask, 'Is this working, is this getting the objectives, do they have the objectives clear?'"

Senator Lloyd Bentsen, Democrat of Texas, and a member of the intelligence panel, said today that Mr. Moynihan was "justified in changing his mind" because both the "committee and the agency was being hurt."